

The City of Springfield, Ohio
City Commission Special Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 20, 2021 – 5:00 p.m.
City Hall Forum

The special meeting was called to order by President Copeland. Roll call was answered by Mrs. Chilton, Dr. Estrop, Mr. O'Neill, Mr. Rue, and Mr. Copeland.

RETREAT

115-21 City Manager Heck welcomed commissioners, staff and guests to the 2021 City Commission Retreat and noted the originally-scheduled dates in March were postponed to allow for in-person meetings while maintaining safe distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fire Chief Miller gave a presentation on new fire stations on the first night and would present Fire Services Fees and EMS Revenue information on the second night of the Retreat. In 2020 the architectural firm BKV Group conducted a review of existing fire stations. Six of the seven stations are considered in poor condition and Station #3 is considered critical for replacement. All stations average 55 years old and do not meet the needs of larger equipment or a diverse workforce housing both male and females. Station #3 and #6 should be considered first for replacement or renovation due to city growth and the longest response time. Chief Miller noted Station #3 houses a 26-year old fire engine which is the only one that will fit inside the small building.

Chief Miller reviewed historical maps showing the fire station locations and city growth patterns over 70 years of fire service. Planning for future fire station locations must include response time, unit hour utilization (fire apparatus usage), daily staffing, data collection, and cross-training.

The Ohio Fire Chiefs' Association assisted Springfield staff to assess existing service compared and identified new locations for best response times for all areas. One recommendation was reducing the number of stations from seven to six strategic locations.

Discussion with commissioners, Chief Miller and Mr. Heck included planning for replacement of stations over a number of years but considering the replacement of #3 and #6 at the same time as they are the most critical. Chief Miller also noted that 88 percent of service calls were for EMS in 2018 and 89 percent were for EMS in 2019. There is a need to modernize the other stations in the meantime to accommodate female employees. Discussion also included the possibility of creating EMS stations in some areas instead of fire stations. Chief Miller indicated EMS stations were not included as part of the study, but could be considered in the future planning. CARES Act funding for infrastructure and fire services was discussed along with comparing other like-sized cities for their solutions.

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Service Director Moore presented Commissioners with a street paving update. Mr. Moore described a partnership with the Clark County Transportation Coordinating Committee to assess the pavement condition of each street in the city and assigning a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) rating. Information obtained helps identify areas that need addressed and the correlation of areas where Columbia Gas has completed underground work. Mr. Moore noted the City receives sewer data from the areas where Columbia Gas has worked saving additional investigative work for staff.

Mr. Moore reviewed the Neighborhood Street Paving program and compared the cost per mile for many of the streets repaired in the past few years from less than \$400,000 per mile up to nearly \$1,300,000 per mile for Ward Street. The majority of the streets average \$650,000 per mile. Several streets have been paved by in-house staff, but Mr. Moore noted it can be difficult to find streets available and appropriate for in-house paving that are not part of other projects.

Commissioners and staff discussed the period of 2009 to 2018 when there were no funds for neighborhood street repairs primarily due to reductions in Local Government Funds from the state and the high price of asphalt. Columbia Gas continues to replace gas lines in the city and street repairs follow their work. Mr. Moore also spoke on a local contractor's offer to chip/seal one street for free to demonstrate their process. Staff is working to identify a street eligible for this work.

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Mr. Moore also spoke on the Long Term Control Plan related to the combined sewer overflow system. In the past year, an alternative analysis was completed looking at all 50 overflow locations. Staff conducted public education and outreach by meeting virtually with a cross section of community members to discuss the impact of sewer rates on the local economy and the environmental impact. Staff met with the Ohio EPA and were asked to file an extension to continue monitoring Springfield's efforts through 2023. Mr. Moore noted staff was recently informed by the OEPA that they understand the local economy cannot support additional spending on combined sewer controls as expected. Staff continues to work with OEPA to negotiate a final plan.

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Police Chief Graf presented information to Commissioners on crime statistics and the process of modernizing techniques and technology for the Springfield Police Division. On January 1, 2021, Springfield police switched from reporting crime statistics to the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) via Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) to National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) along with all other agencies in the country. The NIBRS system collects statistics on all incidents which will initially look higher crime numbers, but they are more detailed numbers. Chief Graf shared graphics comparing the two methods of reporting. Commissioners and Chief Graf discussed Community Policing, body cameras, and hybrid police cruisers.

Finance Director Beckdahl presented a five-year financial forecast for the General Fund for 2022 through 2026. The continuation of 0.4 percent income tax levy is critical for the health of the budget generating \$7 million per year. Mr. Beckdahl discussed reimbursements to specialty funds and expected payroll expenses. The employee health insurance costs have decreased after moving to a self-insured plan. Final fund balances for each year are mandated to be at least 10 percent, and the projected balances for this period are between 21 and 23 percent. Mr. Beckdahl added the continuation of the levy is crucial for future projects such as replacement fire houses and updated legacy software. Discussion also included the possibility of financial crisis by 2023 or 2024 if the levy continuation fails.

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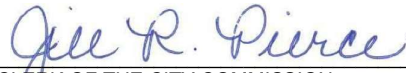
There being no further business, on motion of Dr. Estrop, seconded by Mrs. Chilton, the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Yeas, Mrs. Chilton, Dr. Estrop, Mr. O'Neill, Mr. Rue, and Mr. Copeland.

Yeas 5, Nays 0.



PRESIDENT OF THE CITY COMMISSION



CLERK OF THE CITY COMMISSION